

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 894

By Dunn

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Father James Vann Johnston, Jr., upon being appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those individuals who have answered a divine call to the ministry and who have served with dedication, vigor, and enthusiasm to perform God's work for their congregations and their communities; and

WHEREAS, Father James Vann Johnston, Jr., Pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Alcoa, was recently appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Missouri; and

WHEREAS, the Diocese of Knoxville's chancellor since 1996, Bishop-designate Johnston, at forty-eight years old, will be the second-youngest ordinary, or head of a diocese, in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the consecration and installation Mass for Father Johnston will be celebrated in Springfield on March 31, 2008, which is on the transferred feast of the Annunciation; and

WHEREAS, the consecrating bishop is Archbishop Raymond L. Burke of St. Louis; the co-consecrators are Father Johnston's predecessor, retiring Bishop John J. Leibrecht, who has led the Diocese since 1984, and former Knoxville shepherd Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, a Knoxville native, James Vann Johnston, Jr., was born on October 16, 1959, to Patricia and Vann Johnston, Sr.; he was baptized by Holy Ghost Catholic

Church associate pastor Father James M. Bowling and served as an altar boy early in life; and

WHEREAS, Father Johnston grew and developed intellectually, physically, and, most importantly, spiritually as a student for eight years at St. Joseph School, where he played on the football team; and

WHEREAS, Father Johnston attended Knoxville Catholic High School, where, in addition to being a very pious young man, he excelled in academics and athletics; he earned the rank of Eagle Scout, was a member of the National Honor Society, and played on the basketball team; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and worked as an electrical engineer; and

WHEREAS, Father Johnston was called by God to the ministry, and entered St. Meinrad Seminary in 1985; and

WHEREAS, on June 9, 1990, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Anthony J. O'Connell at Holy Ghost; and

WHEREAS, Father Johnston worked assiduously as an associate pastor at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Oak Ridge, and then at St. Jude Catholic Church in Chattanooga, where he also taught at Notre Dame High School; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, he began studying for his licentiate in canon law at The Catholic University of America, and received the degree in 1996; he became the Diocese of Knoxville Chancellor that year and also an associate pastor at his home parish of Holy Ghost; and

WHEREAS, appointed moderator of the curia in late 2001, Father Johnston served at Holy Ghost until the following summer when his two diocesan roles became full time; and

WHEREAS, Bishop-designate Johnston is a humble and faith-filled servant of the Lord who consistently seeks God's will and embraces that will in his daily decisions and in his assisting of others; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career as a religious leader and humble servant of God, Bishop-designate Johnston has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his friends, his family, and the many and diverse members of his parish and diocese; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Father James Vann Johnston upon being appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Missouri, as we thank him for his many years of honorable service and spiritual inspiration to the people of Tennessee, and wish him every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.